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AUTHOR Haile, Penelope J.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a Hofstra University (New York) project, funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), that involved teacher-student collaboration to develop a curriculum-based web page. Seventeen school districts participated in a 12-hour training program to teach school-based teams (one school library media specialist and two students) to create World Wide Web home pages for their schools. The home pages were designed to be curriculum-based sites for augmenting classroom instruction. Teams attended Hofstra University for four biweekly, hands-on sessions on creating and maintaining home pages. Each team prepared two projects. At the conclusion, three outside experts critiqued teams' efforts and provided constructive feedback. Participants completed short questionnaires on their reactions to the project. School administrators completed telephone surveys on their reactions. School teams' Web pages were reviewed during the following academic year. Several media specialists and students were greatly empowered by the training. Most teams incorporated two or more interesting features into their Web pages. A quarter of the teams had difficulty with very rudimentary aspects of the task, and the short training did not provide enough time, with guidance and instruction, to succeed. The project did not result in any changes in the area of curriculum. The two appendixes present a sample letter to the Superintendent of Schools explaining the Web Page Training Program and the CPB grant curriculum. (SM)

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TEACHER-STUDENT COLLABORATION TO CREATE A CURRICULUM-BASED WEB PAGE

Penelope J. Haile, Ph.D.
Hofstra University
Hempstead, New York 11549

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P. Haile

Paper presented at the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Annual Meeting in New Orleans, February 26, 1998.

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TEACHER-STUDENT COLLABORATION TO CREATE A CURRICULUM-BASED WEB PAGE

Penelope J. Haile, Ph.D.
Hofstra University
February 26, 1998

Seventeen school districts participated in a 12-hour training program to teach school-based teams of school library media specialists and students to create World Wide Web home pages for their schools that were curriculum-based sites to augment classroom instruction. Each of the 17 districts sent a team of one school library media specialist and 2 students to the local university for 4 bi-weekly hands-on sessions on how to create and maintain web pages that can be used in multiple ways as an integral part of the classroom instructional program. At the conclusion of the project, 3 outside critics with expertise in Home Pages were brought in to critique the teams' efforts and provide them with constructive feedback on their work. Most districts sent teams from their high schools, a few were from elementary schools. The following paper describes the project from the selection of the school districts to the syllabus for the Home Page Construction course. Examples of district products and evaluation results are given.

Project Design

As a follow-on to the Ernest L. Boyer Technology Summits and with funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a team consisting of a university administrator, a Board of Cooperative Educational Services administrator and 2 classroom teachers conducted a project that explored the efficacy of a collaboration of library media specialists and gifted and talented students to create sophisticated Home Pages for educational purposes.

Participant Selection Issues

The project was limited to school districts in Nassau County because of the project management teams' commitment to these districts. However, Nassau County has 56 school districts and the computer training laboratory could accommodate only 18 school district teams. Therefore, a letter of invitation and applications (see Appendix A) were sent to all Superintendents of Schools in Nassau County. The selection criteria were clearly spelled out:

1. The school library had to have graphical Internet access,
2. The school district did not already have a Web Page, and
3. The agreement of the Superintendent of Schools that the school district was committed to creating and maintaining a Web Page.

The School District Design Teams consisted of a School Library Media Specialist and two students. School Library Media Specialists were selected as the appropriate school-based teacher to lead these teams because they are positioned within their schools to work with **all** teachers and students in **all** subject areas and can provide support for interdisciplinary investigations using information resources in traditional and nontraditional formats. Several Superintendents called us

to request that their "Computer Teacher" be the teacher to receive Web Page training. However, we were most anxious to empower the School Library Media Specialists because of their curriculum and research focus. In this way, we hoped that the trained librarian would be able to act as a liaison between the computer specialist and the classroom teachers, thus reinforcing that the school's Web Page could and should be used in the service of the school's academic programs rather than limited to public relations and general announcements. One Superintendent remained skeptical and requested that his "computer teacher" be an observer during the training sessions, which we permitted.

The two students on the teams were students whom we suggested be "gifted and talented" students because the "gifted and talented" school population represents a heretofore untapped resource for projects on the cutting edge of educational technology. In addition, a number of schools are struggling for ways to channel the creative energy of talented students who have become Internet/WWW "experts." These talented students frequently know more about the Internet/WWW than their teachers, yet they are self taught and have large knowledge gaps. This project enabled selected students to use their talents to teach others, to learn how to research a curriculum-driven question, and to develop new, useful computer skills.

The Workshops

The participants attended 4 3-hour hands-on workshops that introduced them to the use of Netscape Gold to construct Home Pages on the Web. The workshops included discussions, demonstrations, team collaborative on-line research and design, and mini-lessons on such topics as copyright laws, aesthetic issues in design, concepts of "audience" in communication theory, and researching and building links to other websites. (The outline of the course can be found in Appendix B)

The workshop included a "recognition contest" as a culminating activity. Each school team prepared two projects. The first project was to design a simple district or school web page modeled after the currently popular school district information/public relations pages used by several local districts. As the teams worked on their designs, mini-lessons were provided to help the teams develop:

- the technical skills in the use of Netscape Gold that they needed,
- the aesthetic and design awareness to start to think like designers, and
- an understanding of the New York State Learning Standards in Language Arts and appreciation of the opportunities they provide for curriculum innovation.

In order to facilitate the development of these skills and understandings, the mini-lessons utilized guest speakers, on-line analysis of existing home pages of several local school districts, and hands-on practice of the technical skills with help from two or more student assistants, as well as the project management team and the workshop leader.

The second project was to design a web page that was curriculum-driven, based on the new New York State Learning Standards, especially those for Language Arts. This second project was

evaluated by a Review Team composed of a professor of Communication with expertise in construction of home pages, a Nassau BOCES technology trainer, and a professor of Education with experience using web pages in courses. The five teams with the best examples of academic web pages, as determined by the Review Team, presented their projects to the whole group.

Finances

Funding for this project was provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as a "follow-on" project to the NCATE- and CPB-sponsored Ernest L. Boyer Technology Summit series. Each school design team was provided with a travel stipend of $80 to attend the 4 workshops. The 6 trainers/guest speakers and 4 student assistants were also paid through the grant. Light refreshments were provided each of the 4 days and this was also paid for through the grant.

Evaluation of the Project

The evaluation of the project was based on three sources of information: self-reports of participant reactions, review of the school teams' web pages during the following academic year, and telephone survey of school administrators' reactions.

Participant Feedback

The participants were asked to respond to a short questionnaire immediately following the last workshop session. Of the originally chosen 18 design teams, 17 attended at least 3 of the 4 workshops (one team dropped out early on because they perceived themselves as needing more advanced training). One of these teams had only 1 rather than 2 students working with the Library Media Specialist. Therefore, there were 50 individuals who received training and 34 of these were in attendance for the last workshop. The response rate for the participant feedback was 88% (30 completed questionnaires) of those who attended the final workshop.

The questionnaire contained 6 short questions. Twenty-four participants (80%) reported that the training helped them to create a Home Page and 28 participants (93%) felt that "working in a team with a teacher and students work(ed) well for (them)." We asked the participants what was the best thing about the teacher/student collaboration. Over 40% of the respondents reported that the best thing was the cooperation and team work (process). Over 36% reported that getting ideas and answers from each other was the best aspect of the collaboration (product). As one participant wrote, "It provided two distinct views on what content and how to implement it on the home page." Another wrote, "We both learned together out of the school environment."

We also asked the participants to comment on the "worst thing about the teacher and students working together on the Home Page." Twelve of the 30 (40%) respondents felt there were no "worst things." However, one participant mentioned that the students were too fast and tended to get bored with the technology mini-lessons. The other problems mentioned are commonly found when new work groups gear-up: "ownership" issues, sharing resources, and finding common time to work together.

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The fifth question asked what they still needed to know about Home Page development. As expected, the responses were wide-ranging and, in many cases, unexpectedly specific, such as Java capplets, html coding, shockwave, legal limits on liability, etc. As one participant wrote, "There's too much to write. I'm just beginning and hope to learn more in the future." As a final question, we asked the participants to grade the training project. Twenty of the thirty participants (67%) felt the training deserved a grade of A, while 3 participants assigned the training an A- or B+, 5 participants assigned a B, and 2 participants assigned a C, the lowest grade assigned by the participants. One of those who rated the workshop as a "C" (wrote "OK") indicated that she/he needed "someone saying step 1 - do this etc." The other "C" was given by a participant who felt that the worst thing about the project was "Disagreeing on the computer platform and being limited with the Netscape editor," which are rather sophisticated concerns.

Review of School Design Team Web Pages

Table 1 shows the 17 School Design Teams that completed the program: the districts, the Library Media Specialists and the students. In addition, the Web Site Projects are listed. The table is available on the Project Home Page (URL=http://www.hofstra.edu/SOE/CPB) and the Web Site Projects are linked to the table. The school teams' web pages created during the 4-session workshop were superficially rated as either minimal, simple, or complex. One school team (Plainedge) did not upload its web page prepared during the training. Instead, they filed their projects on a disk which they would then take back and forth to their school. Of the remaining 16 teams, 10 (63%) are complex web pages, meaning that they contain several of the following: gifs, multiple colors, hot links to other web pages, scanned photographs, a variety of fonts, moving banners, etc. Two more team web pages (13%) were rated as simple pages, meaning that they contained only two or three of the above features. Four team pages (25%) created only a very minimal start for a web page. Clearly for these 25%, a 12-hour introduction to web page construction was insufficient. For the other 75%, the workshop gave them a variety of tools with which to build their Web Pages and some rudimentary understandings of the curriculum opportunities Web Pages can provide.

The School Administrators' Feedback

Each supervisor (principal, assistant principal, etc.) of the 17 School Design Team was contacted by telephone during the semester following the training (Winter 1997). Two supervisors did not respond: one did not return our telephone calls and another said he did not wish to respond. All of the 15 who did respond felt that the Web Page construction training would benefit all students, not just the "gifted and talented." One principal responded that all students could benefit especially with the integration of computer technology in all subject areas. This principal would like to see the creation of homework help pages for her school. Another respondent noted that two students who participated in the training are now mentoring 5th grade classes and instructing them on Web Page creation.

The administrators also reported that it was a good idea for library specialists and students to work together on Web Page design and construction. As one principal said, "the students had a

TABLE 1: School Teams and Web Pages

District	Media Specialist	Students	Grade	Web Site	Homepages
Bellmore-Merrick	E. Johanson	J. Chu J. Pollizi	10 10	cpbwww01	
Bethpage	C. Donohue	B. Seidman T. Kalinic	10 11	cpbwww02	None
East Meadow	S. Purins	C. Kocienda M. Sherlock	9 11	cpbwww03	None
East Rockaway	N. Minkoff	D. Dorato S. Scaturro	9 10	cpbwww004	
Garden City	J. McAleese	S. Martens A. Nikolakakas	11 12	cpbwww005	
Great Neck	J. Friedman	M. Smelov M. Sheehan	9 10	cpbwww006	
Herricks	M. E. Guarini	S. Jain S. Nesbitt	9 9	cpbwww007	Herricks.org
Levittown	T. D'Ambrosio	J. Rosenblum	12	cpbwww008	
Lynbrook	P. Yosca	A. Lee C. Insiesta	7 7	cpbwww10	
Malverne	M. Smith	D. Coonan S. Lorner	10 11	cpbwww11	None
Massapequa	C. Krieg	M. Scheiner P. Polichronakis	11 11	cpbwww12	
Mineola	M. Abramowitz	W. Fastenau K. Kavanaugh	10 11	cpbwww13	None
North Bellmore	L. Pfeufer	K. Strombelline R. Roth	5 5	cpbwww14	
Oceanside	S. Marcus	L. Rozenberg M. Lewis	10 9	cpbwww15	
Oyster Bay	C. Fountaine	F. LaBella A. Levey	7 7	cpbwww16	None
Plainedge	M. Gilmartin	J. Mindlin N. Pantino	11 11	cpbwww	
Uniondale	M. Saragnese	M. Alam J. Wudarski	9 9	cpbwww18	

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true understanding of the Internet." Another principal reported that the library media specialist came away with the understanding of what works well, such as don't include too many graphics because it takes so much time to download. This library media specialist, working with the students, created the Principal's, Nurse's, Library, Art and Faculty pages. The administrators report that the students enthusiastically perform a myriad of tasks, such as designing the pages, gathering the information, scanning in pictures, taking pictures with a digital camera, and maintenance of the web pages.

Conclusions

All of the 17 School Design Teams started their school web pages during the training. Most teams were able to incorporate two or more interesting features, such as gifs, animation, or scanned-in photographs. A quarter of the teams, however, experienced difficulty with the most rudimentary aspects of the task, and this short training did not permit them the time, with guidance and instruction, to succeed.

Several library media specialists were greatly empowered by the training. One is now the Web Master for her school, another is the co-advisor of the school's computer club. Similarly, some of the students were empowered to provide very useful assistance to their schools by not only creating and maintaining web pages, but also by acting as mentors to younger students.

Of course, there were problems when the teams returned to their schools and tried to implement what they had learned. Some schools are experiencing technical problems with Cablevision. One school has problems with the installation of the Web Server. Another school has yet to secure Internet access. These problems, while they are hopefully temporary, are frustrating for the teams. Unfortunately, however, they are to be expected when working with advanced technologies that are new to the schools.

The most significant weakness of the project was with respect to the integration of the Learning Standards into the Web Pages. It appears that no changes took place in the area of curriculum as a result of this project. The present challenge to the teams seems to be to master the technology. The curriculum and curriculum innovations are still to come.

Appendix A

xxx xxx, Superintendent of Schools
xxx School District
xxxxx
xxxx, NY 11xxx

Dear Superintendent xxx:

The Nassau School Library System and Hofstra University have joined together to sponsor a Web Page Training Program funded in part by a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The program will provide training in the construction and maintenance of school or school district websites for 16 school districts in Nassau County. We would like to invite you to consider whether this program would be of interest to you and whether you should apply for one of the 16 openings.

The training is available for one 3-person team from each of 16 different Nassau County school districts. The program will take place on 4 Thursday afternoons in April and May 1997 at the Nassau BOCES Internet Training Lab in Greenvale. Each team will receive a very modest stipend of $80 to defray travel costs. The training will be from 3:30 - 6:30 on April 3, April 17, May 1, and May 8.

World Wide Web experts drawn from the faculty of Hofstra University will provide sessions on the technical information needed to construct a webpage, the aesthetic and graphical considerations involved in webpage development, the copyright and legal issues involved in this form of publishing, how to incorporate curriculum materials and activities into a Home Page, and similar topics of interest and concern. The 3-person teams will consist of a school or district Library Media Specialist and 2 "gifted/talented" students selected by the district in consultation with the project's Gifted/Talent Student Coordinator Joseph D'Angelo (Manhasset School District).

The teams will develop a prototype Home Page for their districts which will include curriculum materials and student activities that are designed to address one of the standards in the *Learning Standards for English Language Arts*. Appropriate curriculum materials and student activities will be developed with the assistance of the project's Curriculum Coordinator Dr. Anthony Palumbo (Plainedge School District).

The goal of the project is to provide 16 school districts with resident experts (1 Library Media Specialist and 2 students) who have the skills and knowledge to construct and maintain your district's Home Page so that it will be an attractive and useful tool for instruction, as well as for public relations. Therefore, we are seeking districts that are committed to creating and maintaining a webpage and Library Media Specialists who have graphical Internet access from their libraries and the extra time needed for success. We would like to provide this opportunity to those districts that do not already have a Home Page.

We hope that you will consider this invitation to send a team from your district. We are excited by the opportunity that this grant gives us to assist districts to incorporate technology into the curriculum of their schools and hope that it will fill a need in this fast-changing arena. If you would like to apply for this Web Page Training Program, please complete the enclosed application and return it to the address on the form. The deadline for applications is March 14th. Applicants will be notified of their program status by March 17th.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact either of us at the phone numbers below.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this invitation. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Penelope J. Haile, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, School of Education
Hofstra University (463-5743)

Carol Kroll, M.S.L.S., C.A.S.
Director of the Nassau School Library System
Board of Cooperative Educational Services (626-9408)

cc: Herman A. Berliner, Ph.D., Provost and Dean of Faculties, Hofstra University
Charles W. Fowler, Ph.D., District Superintendent of Schools, Nassau BOCES

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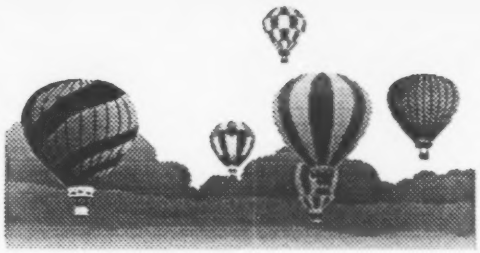

APPLICATION FOR WEB PAGE TRAINING PROGRAM

Sponsored by Hofstra University and
the Nassau School Library System

Funded in part by a Grant from
The Corporation for Public Broadcasting

School District_____

Contact Person_____

Address_____

Telephone Number_____ Fax Number_____

Library Media Specialist_____

E-mail Address_____

School_____

Does the School Library have graphical Internet access? ___yes ___no

Does the School District or a School in the District have a Web Page? ___yes ___no

The _____ School District is committed to creating and maintaining the Web Page.

Signed:_____ Date:_____
Superintendent of Schools

Please return this completed application no later than March 14, 1997 to:
Dr. Penelope J. Haile
124 Hofstra University
Hempstead, NY 11550-1090

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APPENDIX B

CPB Grant Curriculum

Introduction

The curriculum was developed with the design goal of getting the participants actively involved in creating web pages themselves in the shortest amount of time possible. We wanted to insure that the younger students were actively engaged early on so that we kept their attention. Netscape Gold was chosen as the primary authoring tool since it was available for free to educational institutions. It also provided a word processing metaphor with which most were familiar.

The course was project oriented. It also included lecture/demonstrations on the fundamentals of web page design, web page aesthetics, evaluation of web pages, and how you can use the web for curriculum projects. The course culminated in a recognition contest. Their projects were evaluated by a team of designers and educators and the top five were chosen for presentation by the designing team to the class.

Session 1: 3 hours

- Goals of the course
- Fundamentals of web page design
- Basics of HTML
- Description of Project One - Create a Library, School or District Home Page (This topic was chosen because it was familiar to most participants. We wanted them to have an early success)
- Hands-on work on Project One
- Review of the day's accomplishments

Session 2: 3 hours

- Aesthetics of web page design; examples of good and poor school web pages currently on WWW
- Hands-on work on Project One
- Review of Project One (with mini-lessons as needed)
- Description of Project Two: Design a seb of web pages based on the NY State Learning Standards for Language Arts

Session 3: 3 hours

- Designing curriculum-based web pages - what works and what doesn't
- Review of NY State Learning Standards for Language Arts

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- Hands-on work on Project Two
- Preliminary review of Project Two (with mini-lessons as needed)
- Criteria for Project Two evaluation

Session 4: 3 hours

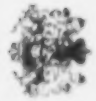
- Finish Project Two
- Question and Answer period for technical support
- Publishing work to the web site
- Project Two evaluation by the Review Team*
- Presentations by the five best class examples done for Project Two by school librarian/student teams

* Review Team composition:
Professor of Communication with expertise in construction of home pages
Nassau BOCES Technology Trainer
Professor of Education in Department of Curriculum and Teaching with experience using web pages in courses.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

PENELOPE J. HAILE, PH.D.
HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

TEACHER-STUDENT COLLABORATION TO CREATE A CURRICULUM-BASED WEBPAGE



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Seventeen school districts participated in a 12-hour training program to teach school-based teams of school library media specialists and students to create World Wide Web home pages for their schools that were curriculum-based sites to augment classroom instruction.

The selection criteria were:

- The school library had to have graphical Internet access,
- The school district did not already have a Web Page, and
- The agreement of the Superintendent of Schools that the school district was committed to creating and maintaining a Web Page.

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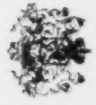
WHY LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST?

- can provide mentoring and support to all teachers in all subject areas
- experience with interdisciplinary investigations using traditional and non-traditional information resources
- has a curriculum and research focus
- empowers a non-technical teacher



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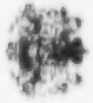
WHY TWO STUDENTS?

- some students have extraordinary expertise in the Internet and with computers
- schools are searching for ways to engage "gifted and talented" students
- some students have TIME to spend on web projects
- students bring another perspective to the process and are users of the website



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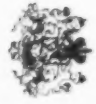
WORKSHOP CURRICULUM

- technical skills in the use of Netscape Gold
- aesthetic and design awareness
- concept of "audience" in communication theory
- information about copyright laws and permissions to use others' material
- reflection on New York State Learning Standards



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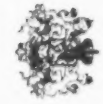
REVIEW TEAM

- Professor of Communication with expertise in web page construction
- Nassau BOCES technology trainer
- Professor of Education with experience using web pages in courses



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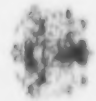
PROJECT EVALUATION

- Self-reports of participant reactions
- review of the school teams' web pages during the academic year following training
- telephone survey of school administrators' reactions



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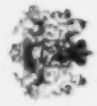
PARTICIPANTS' REACTIONS

- ≈80% report that training helped them to create a Home Page
- ≈93% collaboration "worked well"
- ≈67% rated the training as A
- ≈27% rated the training as A-,B+, or B
- ≈7% rated the training as C
- ≈97% still need to learn more!



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STRENGTHS OF COLLABORATING

- both learning together out of the school environment
- having two distinct views on content and implementation of the web page
- getting ideas and answers from each other

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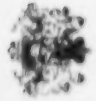
WEAKNESSES OF COLLABORATION

- Students too fast and tended to get bored with the technology mini-lessons
- problems with "ownership" of the web page
- sharing resources
- finding common time to work together between workshop sessions



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PILOT WEB PAGES

- 16 web pages were reviewed
- 10 were complex in structure, using gifs, multiple colors, hot links, scanned photographs, a variety of fonts, moving banners, etc.
- 2 were simple in structure, using only two or three of the above
- 4 were minimal

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TABLE 1: School Teams and Web Pages

District	Media Specialist	Students	Grade	Web Site	Homepages
Bellmore-Merrick	E. Johanson	J. Chu J. Pollizi	10 10	cpbwww01	
Bethpage	C. Donohue	B. Seidman T. Kalinic	10 11	cpbwww02	None
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East Rockaway	N. Minkoff	D. Dorato S. Scaturro	9 10	cpbwww004	
Garden City	J. McAleese	S. Martens A. Nikolakakas	11 12	cpbwww005	
Great Neck	J. Friedman	M. Smelov M. Sheehan	9 10	cpbwww006	
Herricks	M. E. Guarini	S. Jain S. Nesbitt	9 9	cpbwww007	Herricks.org
Levittown	T. D'Ambrosio	J. Rosenblum	12	cpbwww008	
Lynbrook	P. Yosca	A. Lee C. Insiesta	7 7	cpbwww10	
Malverne	M. Smith	D. Coonan S. Lorner	10 11	cpbwww11	None
Massapequa	C. Krieg	M. Scheimer P. Polichronakis	11 11	cpbwww12	
Mineola	M. Abramowitz	W. Fastenau K. Kavanaugh	10 11	cpbwww13	None
North Bellmore	L. Pfeufer	K. Strombelline R. Roth	5 5	cpbwww14	
Oceanside	S. Marcus	L. Rozenberg M. Lewis	10 9	cpbwww15	
Oyster Bay	C. Fountaine	F. LaBella A. Levey	7 7	cpbwww16	None
Plainedge	M. Gilmartin	J. Mindlin N. Pantino	11 11	cpbwww	
Uniondale	M. Saragnese	M. Alam J. Wudarski	9 9	cpbwww18	

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ADMINISTRATORS' FEEDBACK

- 15 (88%) administrators responded to our inquiries
- 100% felt that Web Page construction training would benefit ALL students
- 1 principal reported that the Team students were now mentoring 5th grade students and instructing them on Web Page construction
- the Library Media specialists were now empowered, offering the school important skills
- the students were still very enthusiastic

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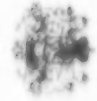
THANK YOU!

- Some web sites you might want to see:

WWW.hofstra.edu/SOE/CPB

WWW.herricks.org



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